

the sighting made by the late Theodore A. Parker III: we record our thanks to these people for their most helpful responses to our enquiries.

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## Distribution of Blue Crowned Pigeon *Goura cristata* on north Seram

by Alastair A. Macdonald

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The Blue Crowned Pigeon *Goura cristata* recently reported from Seram by Kitchener *et al.* (1993) had been stumbled across in a village near the coast. Two years later (August 1993) the author returned to the island to carry out a more systematic investigation of its distribution in the north-central part of Seram. It is pertinent to note that the author was returning to people in villages whom he knew and had visited during previous field trips in 1987, 1990 and 1991 (Edwards *et al.* 1993). Information concerning the wider distribution of *Goura* has recently been published by King & Nijboer (1994).

Coloured photographic prints of the Blue Crowned Pigeon were shown to residents, shopkeepers, forestry guards (PHPA) and logging company personnel from the city of Ambon, and villages on the coast and in the interior of north-central Seram (Fig. 1). The respondents were asked if they recognised the bird, to indicate where they thought it came from, then asked if the bird was present on Seram and where it might be found on the island.

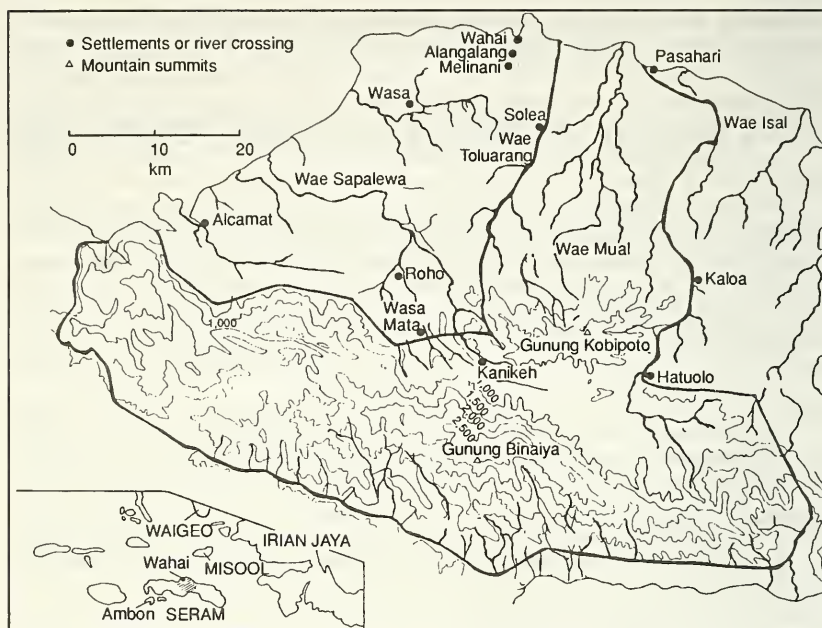


Figure 1. Map of Manusela National Park indicating the rivers of the Mual plains and the location of the villages and the river crossing mentioned in the text. The insert places Seram in relation to Ambon and Irian Jaya.

Those who lived in the city of Ambon or who, like shopkeepers and fishermen, lived solely in villages on the north coast of Seram either failed to recognise the bird or used the non-specific name *mambruk* reported by Kitchener *et al.* (1993) and indicated that it came from Irian Jaya; several mentioned that it was sometimes received as a gift from relatives living in that region; it was not infrequently shipped to Ambon. One bird was reportedly seen being loaded onto a boat from Labuan Pulau Tujuh, a small island to the west of Seram. Forest guards reported that Bula island (east Seram) has many crowned pigeons.

Villagers living in the interior of north-central Seram, particularly the hunters and forest guards from Alangalang, Melinani, Wasa, Roho, Kanikeh, Air Besar, Solea and Pasahari, recognised the birds as living in the forest. They were described as being seen sometimes in pairs or in two pairs and often being heard flying from the ground into the trees; hunters vocally mimicked the *whu-whu-whu-whu* sound of the wings beating which they said was loud, obvious and characteristic; the bird could be found throughout the lowland forest of the Mual plains, bordering the tributaries of the Wae (river) Sapalewa, Wai Toluarang, Wae Mual and Wai Isal (Fig. 1). The people in this region called the Blue Crowned Pigeon *lia mua* or *lia nue* in the Nusaweli language. Hunters in Wasa reported that they could be found as far inland as the

Wasa Mata crossing (c. 350 m). Villagers from Kanikeh concurred; they were not found in the higher countryside towards their village (c. 850 m). Hunters from Solea indicated that they were found in the lowland forests around Kaloa and Hatuolo. The bird was referred to as 'clever' because they found it difficult to catch with local traps. It was therefore not actively hunted for food. It was recognised to be attractive, but only survived one or two weeks of captivity in the forest, in contrast to the longer survival times of lorries (*Eos bornea*, *E. semilarvata*), lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) and cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*).

The survey demonstrated a wide recognition of the presence of the bird throughout the low central part of Seram north of the mountain ridges of Gunung Kobipoto and Gunung Binaiya. Contrary to what is implied in our earlier paper (Kitchener *et al.* 1993), we now think it probable that, like the Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*, the bird was brought to the island by man (White 1975), although it is not clear from this survey how long ago this first occurred. However, the discovery of the existence of a name for the bird in (at least) one of the languages of the island may argue in favour of its presence on the island for a considerable period.

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## The genera of owls in the Asioninae

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The cosmopolitan genus *Asio* Brisson, 1760, contains six or seven species, with greatest diversity in the Old World. Three nominal monotypic genera are closely associated with *Asio* and the four together have been regarded as constituting a subfamily Asioninae (e.g. Ford 1967). An additional character that unites all the asionine owls that was not mentioned by Ford is the very long, slender zygomatic process (Olson & James 1991—not ascertainable in *Nesasio*).